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APRIL 19, 2024 | VOLUME 15 | ISSUE 9

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End of an era: rest in peace to my
mentor, John Sinclair! **page 3**



MEET YOUR
VENDOR:
**MICHAEL
BROWN**
PAGE 3

GROUND COVER

NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP | WASHTENAW COUNTY, MICH.



Groundcover vendors Joe Woods (pictured left) and Glen Page (pictured right) look up to view the solar eclipse on April 8.

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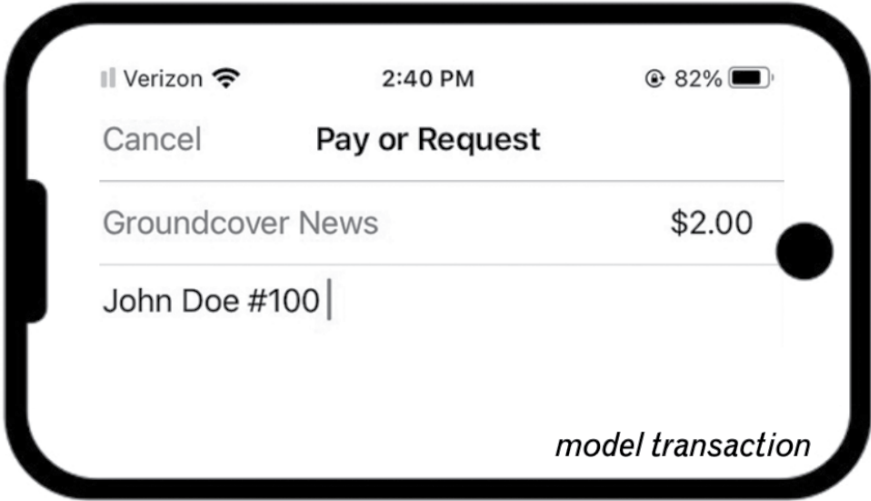
This special edition magazine of Groundcover News aims to put expert perspectives on social issues in conversation: "citizen experts" and "expert citizens." In other words, on topics of the carceral system, addiction, housing policy, sheltering and food insecurity, we will be comparing the solutions and ideas of both people who have expertise through experience, and those who are traditional, "institutional" experts.

Writers are encouraged to write creative, personal narratives about their experience with incarceration, addiction, housing policy, shelters, and food insecurity. How do these issues intersect with, and perpetuate, homelessness? What should be done to make these systems easier to navigate? What changes should be made in Washtenaw County to address these issues?

Alternatively, writers can interview traditional experts and ask their thoughts on the same questions above.

DEADLINE: MAY 3RD, 12PM
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GROUNDCOVER NEWS

PROVIDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELF-DETERMINED INDIVIDUALS IMPACTED BY POVERTY, PRODUCING A STREET NEWSPAPER THAT GIVES A PLATFORM TO UNDERREPRESENTED VOICES IN WASHTENAW COUNTY, PROMOTING AN ACTION TO BUILD A JUST, CARING AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETY.

Groundcover News, a 501(c)(3) organization, was founded in April 2010 as a means to empower low-income persons to make the transitions from homeless to housed, and from jobless to employed.

Vendors purchase each copy of our regular editions of Groundcover News at our office for 50 cents. This money goes toward production costs. Vendors work selling the paper on the street for \$2, keeping all income and tips from each sale.

Street papers like Groundcover News exist in cities all over the United States, as well as in more than 40 other countries, in an effort to raise awareness of the plight of homeless people and combat the increase in poverty. Our paper is a proud member of the International Network of Street Papers.

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MEET YOUR VENDOR



Michael Brown, vendor No. 306

In one sentence, who are you?
Michael Ray Brown.

What is your favorite spot in Ann Arbor? The tennis shoe store.

What is your favorite thing to do in Ann Arbor? Sell my papers.

What words do you live by?
The Truth.

What is something about you that someone on the street wouldn't know? I am 62 years old.

What motivates you to work selling Groundcover News? It's a job!

If you had a warning label, what would it say? Don't be sorry.

What are your hobbies? Football.

What do you wish you knew more about? Cars.

What was your first job? Cleaning up.

What song do you have completely memorized? Sugarhill Rappers Delight.

End of an era: rest in peace to my mentor, John Sinclair!

They say everything must come to an end. But with the end also comes a new beginning. As with people, ideas manifest themselves as good or evil.

My first exposure to someone who could supply information to help me determine whether people and ideas are good or evil, and guide me through decision-making of this magnitude, came in my long conversations with John Sinclair starting when I was 14. Similarly, he was a mentor to a whole generation of confusing, finding-your-own-way, life-altering decisions that we could not do alone. Thank you



WAYNE S.
Groundcover vendor No. 615

John for all you did while you were here — and what I know you'll do through your legacy.

Another lost soldier, another downed hero, another search

begins. As we honor one, the search begins for another. We will be watching for him or her to appear — or maybe they're already here.

I could tell the heroes I have known. At the top John stands alone with his army of one.

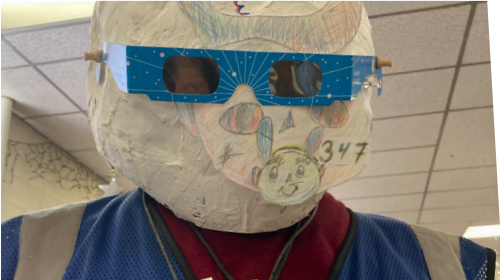
John Sinclair born October 2, 1941, in Flint Michigan.

Spouse: Leni (from 1965-1977)

Died April 2, 2024 in Detroit Receiving Hospital from congestive heart failure, following an illness.

I know what John would say: "POWER TO THE PEOPLE AND KICK OUT THE JAMS!"

Solar eclipse



ROBERTO ISLA CABALLERO
Groundcover vendor No. 347

In 1970, in Havana, Cuba at the age of 10 or 11, I saw the solar eclipse for the first time in Cuban history. At that time, in order to see the solar eclipse, we all made glasses out of dark plastic trash bags because we did not have glasses. 55 years ago, my teacher in Cuba told me and the other students to use plastic bags to see the eclipse. Around the same time, I saw the Soviets put a man on the moon.

I was able to see the solar eclipse again yesterday. It was glowing orange and later the shadow of the moon covered the entire street.

While watching the eclipse, I began to think of many things across Cuban history. The conquistadors travelling across the sea, of nature, of marriage. I thought of the old man, and the boy and the mother of destruction with a cross between their hands. I thought of fathers and the nuns and those converted in the spirit.

"The Princess and the Frog" can teach us about beauty

I remember when "The Princess and the Frog" Disney movie came out at the theater. Me and my boyfriend Richard went to see it together. We went to see it at the Dollar Theater when they had it at Briarwood Mall. I would talk about how I miss dollar theaters ... but that's a subject for another story.

Anyway, I love the fact that the Princess and the Frog movie finally had a Black fairy princess. It's a good thing to talk about for Black history. "The Princess and the Frog" is not only a good moment in Black history but a beautiful movie.

In "The Princess and the Frog," the



DENISE SHEARER
Groundcover vendor No. 485

princess, Tiana, is a very hard worker. She is determined to get what she needs and wants out of life. She works hard and does not depend on, or try to

depend on anyone else to do her hard work for her. Tiana has a good friend and her family helps her, too, with what she needs and wants.

Tiana comes from a loving, hard-working family. She was raised on the fact that it takes hard work and faith to do anything and get anything in life. Her dad was a great chef and he made great gumbo. Her goal was to open up her own restaurant.

When Tiana was a little girl she met her prince, the frog, in her window and kissed him. And even though she was a frog throughout the whole movie, she was beautiful, and it was a beautiful movie. I think frogs have their own

beauty too.

Frogs come in all colors and shapes. They can make a pond or yard beautiful.

The Princess was not looking for her future prince to provide her with her restaurant and things. She ended up getting a restaurant by a lot of hard work and effort and creativity and faith in herself. Her and her prince ended up becoming human beings again and being happy in the moment. It was a very beautiful, colorful, interesting movie and I recommend it to anybody of any age.

In conversation with Commissioner Labarre

Washtenaw County Commissioner Andy Labarre (District 7) and I spoke for about a half an hour on March 20. We talked about money; we talked about barriers and red tape; we talked about sweeps and we talked about a community-run shelter. Most importantly, we talked about human lives.

Labarre is acutely aware people are sleeping outside and informed enough to know the number of people fluctuates and is difficult to track. He said he vaguely understood what is meant by a “sweep,” which is a camp eviction carried out by the police. He did not know about the showdown at the downtown Farmers Market in Ypsi on August 27 of last year, when community activists defended a homeless encampment against law enforcement. This event gave rise to the Shelter Now Action Group (SNAG).

Labarre explained the money part. Lots of different funds, lots of different acronyms, lots and lots of money. I asked him specifically about a unanimous vote of approval last April to open two vacant County buildings for two extra shelters and the approval of three million dollars over two years to get them running. He said that the allocated money was diverted into other programs when the American Rescue Plan Act brought federal



JIM CLARK
Groundcover vendor No. 139

funding to Washtenaw County. In other words, it didn't actually go anywhere, it just got absorbed into the other programs. We stopped talking about it here. The plan for those vacant buildings was never mentioned again. However, Labarre did mention his idea for using the Learning Resource Center and parts of the Towner campus (home to Ypsilanti Community Mental Health) as places for day shelters. These are needed in addition to what ARPA offers to cover.

In terms of short versus long-term solutions, Labarre said, “County response is not strategic, it’s play by play.” Labarre is concerned about the lack of options for solutions. He feels we spend a lot of time on “long-term solutions” which just means building more apartments, and short term

emergency situations, or “putting out fires” as the saying goes. The concern is that there are no plans to get from the emergency state to a long-term viable housing situation. A County funding source Labarre told me about that may help in a very broad sense is the New Human Services Partnership.

From the Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development website: “The New Human Services Partnership Mini-Grant funding round will occur annually to award 10 grants of up to \$40,000 for one year to human service organizations. The main goal of this funding round is to provide smaller organizations that are addressing poverty, racism and trauma as a root cause of institutional inequity in Washtenaw County an opportunity to receive funding. The total funding allocation is currently \$407,707. Organizations with overall budgets of \$1 million or less are eligible to apply. The goal for grantees is to have 60% with leaders with underrepresented identities.” This funding opportunity for 2024 has already passed.

We talked about the community-run shelter that SNAG is advocating for, and what it would take to make it happen. Labarre is not sure how a community-run shelter would look.



Commissioner Andy Labarre represents the eastern half of Ann Arbor (District 7).

His concerns are autonomy and self-regulation — would it be able to operate safely? Is the homeless community network equipped for this? Do they have the skills? Who will be accountable? The money is there, but the infrastructure for a community-run shelter is not.

It seems to me that Labarre is sympathetic towards the homeless community and their advocates. His hands are tied by bureaucratic procedures, but at the end of the day, Andy Labarre is not turning a blind eye to the homeless in our community.

Prioritizing homelessness: take action for change

ERIC PROTEIN MOSELY Homeless activist

With the rise of social media and the increasing accessibility of information, discussions about politics have become more prevalent. People are more engaged and interested in political matters than ever before, as the decisions made by politicians directly impact their lives.

Political issues, policies and debates have infiltrated society, from social gatherings to workplace discussions. The polarization of political ideologies has further fueled the intensity of these conversations. As a result, politics has become a dominant and unavoidable subject in both personal and public spheres, shaping how we think, interact and make decisions — but not everyone agrees on the same agendas.

The main concerns on Michigan voters' minds

In a recent set of reports tracking public opinion on the economy and

Trump-era tax policy, voters in swing districts demonstrated a deep concern about the state of the economy, giving both Democrats and Republicans dismal ratings on their economic performance.

In July 2023, progressive pollster Navigator Research conducted interviews with 1,500 likely voters in 61 battleground districts nationwide and released the results in an online briefing. Voters from Michigan's 3rd Congressional District (represented by Rep. Hillary Scholten, D-Grand Rapids), 18th Congressional District (controlled by Rep. Dan Kildee, D-Flint), and 10th Congressional District (represented by Rep. John James, R-Shelby Twp.) were included in the polls.

One of the reports stated that 40% of voters across the battleground identified inflation as their top concern. What rounded out the top three priorities of Michigan voters varied depending on which party they represented. Homelessness was nowhere to be found within the top five of the majority of surveys conducted and not even

mentioned in others as a concern from either party.

Do politicians care about the unhoused?

A politician is a public servant who is voted into office to fulfill the duties of those who elect them to do so. In reality, they most likely structure their campaign on what the people

determine to be a problem and not so much on what is problematic. It is not their fault when the underlying problem stems from the lack of concern of the voters to make a particular situation more highlighted than others — in this situation we are talking about homelessness.

see **CHANGE** page 11 ➔

**Ann Arbor is evolving
and we need your input
to help shape the future
of our city!**

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Expand housing choices



Improve connections



Grow job opportunities



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to learn more about the
Comprehensive Plan and how
you can get involved
in the process!



Undercover art intel: Gilbert Sam

Struggling veterans on the street need help too. Gilbert Sam is a U.S. Army veteran who discovered that he had real art talent at the age of 23 when he met a homeless man who created macrame art. This man used very thin yarn and created intricate designs. When he learned this new art form, the man taught Gilbert a few ideas and how to make patterns. They had a lot of fun creating necklaces, bracelets, anklets and chokers. He then passed on the art form to Gilbert. Then, one day, he got up and told Gilbert, "Look buddy you got this now," and with that he went on his way.

This art form helped Gilbert out of a lot of bad spots. He used this macrame style for some time in the 2000s. Later he discovered paracord (the lines attached to parachutes) and he works in this style to this day — from dark black, to neon yellow and all colors in between.

Traveling on his motorcycle all over the western United States, he visited many places in California and Nevada. Each year he would travel back to Ann Arbor for Hash Bash to sell the artwork he made during winter. As soon as the last Michigan football game took place, he would hit the road with his



100-pound backpack. He came back to Michigan more permanently in the late 1980s.

Revenue from selling his art helped with basic needs such as shampoo, conditioner, clothes and other necessities. Considering the massive economic and wage difference in goods and services as well as food and snacks, Gilbert feels that art helps him get back on his feet at the end of the month. He sells around 10 items a day. This puts money directly in his hands so he can get extras that very day.

Gilbert got into paracord for therapy.

One day when Gilbert was out and about with his artwork, this gentleman surprised him by buying out all his items that very day. He made around \$80 so he could chill for the rest of the day.



Gilbert Sam's paracord bracelets.

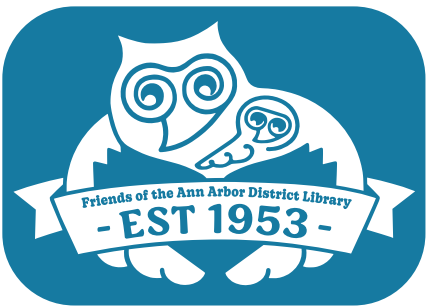
Gilbert makes kids' bracelets as well, and kids love the bright colors. It makes them happy! So come get a paracord bracelet or keychain at his location next to the Knight's restaurant across from the Michigan Theater. He is usually there on Mondays and Fridays in the morning around eight or nine until 11. He loves talking to customers and passersby about his military service and riding his motorcycle across the nation.

What's Happening at the Ann Arbor District Library

The Friends of the Ann Arbor District Library is a non-profit organization that sells gently used books and other items at low prices with proceeds going to support Ann Arbor District Library services and programs like the Summer Game! Anyone can become a member and receive a quarterly e-newsletter, an invitation to an appreciation luncheon, and more!

Visit faadl.org for more details.

Save the Date for the Friends Spring Bag Sale




Saturday, May 18 • 10am–4pm
Sunday, May 19 • 1pm–4pm
Downtown Library

The Friends will hold a huge bag sale in preparation for their upcoming move to Parkland Plaza! Fill a bag for \$5!

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THRIVE
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Tuesdays, 5* - 6:30pm
36 N Washington, Ypsi
Meal provided by FedUp



Registration not
required, just show up.
*Must arrive by 5:15pm
fedupministries.org/thrive



Left: **Kat Layton, Pastor Anna, Monique Taylor-McCants and Justin Banks** taking a break during the clean-up day on April 7. Right: **Volunteers** cleaning windows of the building upfront of the **Growing Hope MarketPlace Hall, FedUp's new home base!**

“A ministry of presence:” With a new downtown location, FedUp continues to grow hope in Ypsi

I want to start by giving a big shout-out to Growing Hope for sharing their Farmers Marketplace (16 S. Washington St.) with the community. I myself have visited FedUp church service and food truck several times this past year and have always enjoyed my time spent there. I say, thank you to Growing Hope!

After some time looking around Ypsilanti for a building to provide needed services to the downtown Ypsi area, FedUp Ministries made an agreement with Growing Hope. They decided to rent the front space, the old bank on Washington Street (now called Black Lives Matter Boulevard). The agreement outlines that FedUp Ministries will rent the building to continue to provide services for those in need of food, clothing, showers, laundry, bathroom access and more. FedUp will rent space for the summer on a trial basis to see how things go.

I got a chance to talk to the founder of FedUp Ministries, Rev. Anna



MIKE JONES
Groundcover vendor No. 113

Taylor-McCants, after Sunday service April 7. The first question I asked her was, “How did the first day of clean-up go after church service Sunday?”

She replied, “It was really good. We had a dozen or more people come out to support and volunteer. It was a beautiful thing, people from all around the community, people from different backgrounds came to help clean and now we are about to enter our painting phase.”

Then I asked her when FedUp Ministries plans to officially open up for service in the new space. She said, “We will start our weekly Sunday church service in May. In June, we plan to have portable showers, laundry and bathrooms, and to serve breakfast and lunch two to three times a week because unlike Ann Arbor, the downtown area of Ypsi has limited bathrooms available due to the temporary downtown library closure.

“Also, the Ypsilanti community does not have a breakfast program, and if a person who can’t afford bus fare won’t be able to get to Ann Arbor for the St. Andrew’s breakfast program, [they won’t be able to access food early in the morning]. On the weekend the bus starts at 8 a.m., thus leaving the Ypsilanti community without the most important meal of the day. Ypsilanti mainly has dinner programs like the Hope Clinic that serves dinner every evening, and other churches also have less frequent dinner programs. We plan to fill the gap for our community. Our services will be just like we’ve been running our services, everybody can eat free, and if you can afford it you can donate.”

I also interviewed Sheri Wander of Peace House, a supporter and friend of the FedUp Ministries community, about her thoughts on the new space for worship and survival services. She said, “I think it is great because a lot of people gravitate to that area, being right downtown, even though people and business owners had their grievances and some legitimate concerns about the area and the unhoused community. Last summer people from the neighborhood and local business owners had a problem with the unhoused community sleeping in that area and took action to remove the unhoused and attempted to put up a

fence around the area...”

“[In August 2023 there was] a mini-protest and confrontation between the unhoused and advocates vs. neighbors and local business. Since that time to this present moment, FedUp has continued their presence there and throughout the Washtenaw County area providing free meals and showers for those in need.

“So now that there is no more daytime warming center and the Ypsilanti nighttime shelter program [has closed], FedUp’s presence will be needed for hot meals, clothing and showers throughout the week.

“A ministry of presence’ Pastor Anna calls it. A lot got done [at the clean-up day] and a really diverse group of people came out in support and to help, like people from Growing Hope, people who are unhoused and formerly unhoused and people from all walks of life who made connections through volunteering working side by side. It was a beautiful day, we were playing Motown music, and everybody was working and having fun.

“There will be food, drinks, showers, laundry, bathrooms, church service, other services and activities. Peace House will be in full support.”

FedUp Ministries summertime schedule starting in May:

Church service 10 a.m. and food truck 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at Growing Hope every Sunday. Showers and bathrooms available.

Every Wednesday food truck will be at Liberty Plaza in Ann Arbor at noon and will be at the Ypsilanti Transit Center at 1:30-2:30 p.m.

Starting in June: Breakfast, lunch, showers, laundry, bathrooms and other services to be continued multiple times a week throughout the summer.



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for I came from God and am here;
I did not come on my own, but he sent me.”
+ Christ Jesus (John 8:42)

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Reportback from Delonis' client advisory meeting

TONY SMITH
Groundcover contributor

On April 3 there was an opportunity for residents of the Delonis Center to participate in what was called “a client advisory / action meeting” (a community meeting where a sample of residents were sought for input). The meeting was held on the third floor after lunch with special guest Dr. Barry Bateman.

Bateman is a member of the Shelter Association of Washtenaw County Board of Directors and head of program development for the Delonis organization. Barry is a U-M graduate who spent most of his professional career as a primary care physician in New York City. When he retired from medicine he returned home and became involved in philanthropy.

Accompanying him at the meeting were staff members and a ton of Girl Scout cookies. Bateman is a likable guy and after he discussed his background, he had us look at a list of themes for what I would describe as kind of a Delphi meeting (defined as “a

structured communication technique or method, originally developed as a systematic, interactive forecasting method that relies on a panel of experts en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delphi_method)

The meeting proceeded this way:

1. Overwhelming general praise for services and staff
2. Case management and housing service issues
3. Clients who feel neglected
4. Concerns about client behavior
5. Concerns about residential programs
6. Concerns about staff behavior. Behavior is inconsistent. (My comment: This is an area I'm not sure about because it kind of depends on the individual's perception.)
7. A newsletter would be helpful addressing housing/shelter/jobs
8. Valued resources external to the Shelter Association and other services for the homeless.

These points are typed as they appeared on the sheet that was given. Between bites of Girl Scout cookies we



Board member Dr. Barry Bateman and Program Director Kate D'Alesio were among those listening to those sheltering at Delonis.

attempted to make it down the list. The “clients” being served (Bateman views it as a service industry) had not been briefed very long before the meeting took place so it was not very organized. However it will likely lead to more focus groups in the coming weeks; reports are to be made to the board about possible improvements.

I think that much of what I see that needs improvement is bad manners; impoliteness and jive turkeys with a

chip on their shoulder. LOL. I absolutely hate listening to people yell at someone on the phone in the cafeteria or get into it with each other. A bit of discretion with heated personal matters would be nice. A bad attitude and a sense of entitlement are not helpful.

Some had said they felt members of the staff might be racist. I think this is a load of bunk, I think everyone I've met

see CLIENT page 10 ➡

Tenant Talk: Loren's dryer testimonial

LOREN
Ann Arbor Tenants Union

So, I have to admit that I don't feel like the issue I want to discuss today is the biggest issue facing renters, and I understand and know there are larger problems facing renters every day.

That being said — why is the dryer always broken?

Almost every month since I started renting my current apartment, one of the dryers, or a washer — sometimes both! — have been broken. Dryers running without heat, washers not running or filled with water, money being deducted but not starting — and it's been this way for all three years. One of my earliest memories at my apartment was finding my clothes still wet in the dryer I used; when I discovered them one of my neighbors came in saw me in frustration, and then told me it's always broken. He had, at the time, been renting there for a few years himself.

When I spoke with McKinley Inc., my landlord, I was informed that they didn't own the machines, so the request would have to go to the third-party company that owns them. Weeks went by, and at some point that dryer was finally fixed, but the other one had started acting up. My frustration grew

over time, and I started taking the bus or a car service to the laundromat — spending more money and time on the issue because it was better than losing money to the machines.

Eventually, I realized this was unsustainable, so I went back to using the machines. One day when I was so annoyed that both dryers were running without heat, I filed a complaint with the third-party company, and weeks later received a paper check for \$7 to refund the money I lost. I haven't requested a refund since; it just didn't seem worth the time and postage.

There seems to be this confusion with landlords about who is responsible for laundry machines. Even if they don't own them, I certainly don't own them, and it's one of the amenities that they offer — one of the only ones I genuinely care about — so why am I unable to confidently go to the laundry room and complete this basic process from start to finish? The sharing aspect doesn't really work when tenants have varying laundry needs — students, families with kids and newborns, overnight shifts, differently abled and elders — all using two washers and two dryers multiple days a week. Of course, they break often. Try being used by 20+ renters week in and week out. I wish I could afford a place with

machines in the unit, but in this current rental market that simply isn't a luxury I can afford.

So, at least once a month, a chore that should take maybe a couple of hours can take five or six. Whole days lost doing laundry. Or worse, not doing laundry at all, only exacerbating the problem for next week. I feel so silly even complaining about this, but as you can see it takes up so much of my free time. And I think, simply put, for

the amount we pay in rent we deserve so much better than having to strategize doing the laundry in 2024, as if it's an impossible task.

Tired of broken laundry machines? Join the Ann Arbor Tenants Union and demand better.

You're invited to our next general meeting: Sunday, May 19, 2-4 p.m. — ICC Education Center, 1522 Hill St.



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The homeless carousel has a pricey ticket

MARKONA LOVE

Groundcover vendor No. 590

I'm sure that I miss my Ann Arborites more than they missed me. Maybe we could change that with a return to the page, with me writing about my new homeless adventures, re-starting our conversation. I bragged and boasted about the greatest little city on Earth as well as the most incredible homeless population ... SHBs (Special Human Beings). Just a reminder about who Ann Arbor's SHBs are: newspaper vendors, community volunteers and humanitarians lifting Ann Arbor from the bottom up. I am proud to say I was one.

Ann Arbor was and always will be my home. I was born in Ann Arbor, lived in Scio, then Barton Hills, where my father was Man of the Year in Ann Arbor and in the Hall of Champions at Barton Hills Golf Club.

Now I have taken my stories to the hard, conservative Boise, Idaho, ... where being homeless is literally a crime. There are others in Boise who wish me to help start a street newspaper here. I came to Boise to visit my oldest son Anthony Martin (28) and my oldest daughter Asia Llana (30).

Both spent a couple rounds in the pen, now out and trying to put their lives together — God willing. This is a whole other fight. I'm learning as I'm trying to teach. Father to son and daughter still with the stereotypical story, "Who knows best?"

Through time and experience I have seen a hidden struggle of homeless people in Boise. SHBs here are in a mental health crisis in which they have been forced to choose between abusive, private behavioral health institutions or prison. I am now in the former and am witnessing these terrifying, heartbreaking stories of law-abiding, intelligent human beings being used to fuel a private and state mental industry to extract money from the federal government. This sickens me.

I am in solidarity with our brothers and sisters, while the ACLU has filed their second federal lawsuit. I beg of our nation to step up their awareness, realize that this is a frontline to a national battle and please support and enlist in this national health crisis that has become a civil war. Are we all waiting for someone to be physically standing on our doormats? The Beatles said "HELP!" Why aren't we? Why are we selling out our nation's soul? Come on!

Where is the love? Have we really emptied our hearts? Will we let the machine pound us all into a fine dust until we just finally blow away in a heated gust?

Time to water the crops, not just the garden. Uncle Sam has forsaken its people; so enlist in our people's revolution for our wellbeing. Why do we wait for this fight to endanger the next generation? "Love one another."

Please pay attention to how much profit is being made by private institutions to incarcerate citizens into a carousel that circulates homeless people from prisons to mental health facilities and back to the street ... hoping to survive the ride. This horrifying carousel ride is making huge

profits while suckling at society's very marrow — driving us into a final disrepair.

One of these private behavioral health institutions is charging \$3,000 per night, per person, to Medicare or Medicaid. These charges are paid with no therapy to the patients. I have witnessed this directly.

I left one world to find another ... left me pondering which one I truly belonged ... one born, one loved. One step from beyond the abyss. We need a new world.

All my Love in Solidarity to our special human beings.

Please send comments or feedback to lovemarkona39@gmail.com

ART ON A JOURNEY GALLERY

April 27 to May 31

The Art on a Journey Gallery is a non-profit gallery of local artists who are currently unsheltered, have been affected by homelessness or are housing insecure and at risk of becoming homeless. Each artist is encouraged to express and share their journey through stunning creations of visual art or sculptures created from unique materials.

Opening reception Sunday May 5th from 2:00 to 3:30.

at Saline District Library
555 N. Maple Road Saline, MI 48176
salinelibrary.org



www.artonajourney.gallery



Art by: Alice, Cindy, Eric, Gordon, Mike, Rachel, Ria, Rose, Sharron and Walt



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Groundcover Vendor Code

While Groundcover is a non-profit, and paper vendors are self-employed contractors, we still have expectations of how vendors should conduct themselves while selling and representing the paper.

The following is our **Vendor Code of Conduct**, which every vendor reads and signs before receiving a badge and papers. We request that if you discover a vendor violating any tenets of the Code, please contact us and provide as many details as possible. Our paper and our vendors should be positively impacting our County.

- Groundcover will be distributed for a voluntary donation. I agree not to ask for more than the cover price or solicit donations by any other means.
- When selling Groundcover, I will always have the current biweekly issue of Groundcover available for customer purchase.
- I agree not to sell additional goods or products when selling the paper or to panhandle, including panhandling with only one paper or selling past monthly issues.
- I will wear and display my badge when selling papers and refrain from wearing it or other Groundcover gear when engaged in other activities.
- I will only purchase the paper from Groundcover Staff and will not sell to or buy papers from other

Groundcover vendors, especially vendors who have been suspended or terminated.

- I agree to treat all customers, staff, and other vendors respectfully. I will not “hard sell,” threaten, harass or pressure customers, staff, or other vendors verbally or physically.
- I will not sell Groundcover under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- I understand that I am not a legal employee of Groundcover but a contracted worker responsible for my own well-being and income.
- I understand that my badge is property of Groundcover and will not deface it. I will present my badge when purchasing the papers.
- I agree to stay off private property when selling Groundcover.
- I understand to refrain from selling on public buses, federal property or stores unless there is permission from the owner.
- I agree to stay at least one block away from another vendor in downtown areas. I will also abide by the Vendor Corner Policy.
- I understand that Groundcover strives to be a paper that covers topics of homelessness and poverty while providing sources of income for the homeless. I will try to help in this effort and spread the word.

If you would like to report a violation of the Vendor Code please email contact@groundcovernews.com or fill out the contact form on our website.

CROSSWORD

from the International Network of Street Papers

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- ACROSS**

1. ___ one's hands in exasperation

8. Thatched

15. Narrow margin

16. On the fritz

17. Secret ___

18. One from a high-altitude, land-locked African country

19. Chamber groups

20. Bone dry

22. "Eh"

23. Charged particles

24. Basket material

25. 1999 Pulitzer Prize-winning play

26. Kind of pie made by children

27. Master of descending stairs

28. Characteristic carrier

29. Attempting

31. Cities with fortifications to keep outsiders away

32. Smooch an English person

33. Upper part of the earth's crust

35. Montezuma, e.g.

38. Shaped like a sword

42. "Buona ___" (Italian greeting)

43. Horrify

45. Born, in bios

46. Mary ___ Cosmetics

47. Jiffy

48. Full house, e.g.

49. "The Sound of Music" backdrop

51. "Darn it!"

52. Weighed the container of

53. Writes in the margins

55. Nocturnal rodent hunter on a farm

57. Fancy food

58. Circles of differently colored skin

59. Transfer of land ownership to "the man" upon death
60. A dutiful server's neverending task

DOWN

1. 4:00, for some

2. Containing water

3. Refreshes the memory of

4. Hodgepodes

5. "Star ___"

6. Take advantage of

7. Wording

8. Yell

9. Chintzy

10. A Scandinavian weave

11. Barley beards

12. Man who survived his spouse

13. Destroying

14. Indicates

21. Cabal

24. Assortment

27. Harmony

28. Chasm

30. Fishing, perhaps

31. Get-out-of-jail money

33. Cineplex feature

34. "Cast Away" setting

35. Sideways

36. Devoted

37. Small intestine enzyme

38. "Beowulf," e.g.

39. Hot, in Vegas

40. It's often a euphemism for gentrification

41. Interferes

43. Acropolis figure

44. Arranged in advance

48. Vietnamese capital

50. Obi, e.g.

52. Not kosher

54. 20-20, e.g.

56. "___ we having fun yet?"

Humanity needs to reconsider its judgmentalism

Humanity did not happen to blink into existence yesterday. It wasn't marooned on this planet by some childish god unwilling to shoulder the responsibility of creating us. Yes, we are a fledgling species that has existed for merely a blink compared to the fullness of time. However, the place we find ourselves in was reached by a lengthy road of trial and error, speculations and confirmations, wars and peace times. We have ventured from literally rubbing sticks together to manipulating atomic structures. We have learned and experienced a great deal.

Ultimately we have reached a general consensus of what is right and what is wrong. So why then do we continue to be influenced by dark impulses that one knows better than to indulge in? Why do and how can we act so superior, yet embrace nihilism and its ultimate self destruction? Should our race cease to exist because of the actions of our worst representations? Well, yeah, definitely if we were to be labeled and stereotyped. These practices conveniently provide the excuse to wipe out the entire group for its offenders.

I would love to believe that an external witness of humanity would have the impression that we are collectively a prospering and productive peace-loving species. Unfortunately I can't say I confidently believe that is how we could be described. And if any such potential judges happen to be prone to the type of stereotyping and labeling that we employ, then we would have no justifiable right to hope for a positive outcome.

Yet we continue to subject others to these methods we instinctively know are wrong. While we passively feign ignorance of such knowledge to satisfy some deep-seated dislike or hatred. This is anything but fair to its countless victims considering all one requires for such poor treatment is some false assumption backed by any kind of



JAMES MANNING
Groundcover vendor No. 16

existing statistic to affirm the attacker's course of reception and at the extreme spectrum, action.

Now what is truly tragic about this behavior is the fact the person who is judged happens to not be the mindless tool or trash you take them for and now are left with this experience, and it's going to affect them in various ways, one way or another. And now with the practice of stereotyping, this unpleasant experience transcends from being an event to an element of their life and a withering assault. Not just that but I use the description withering because it's a presumed assault on one's character. So if you actually took the time to think about it, what do you suppose that would do to somebody? It's no surprise that since this harmful trait is so common among people, everybody seems to be suffering from depression these days.

Now going back to how this aspect of social behavior is indeed tragic, it should be obvious because it certainly does impact a person's mental health and overall self-image and I imagine in cases severe enough would start to impact their actual life. This risks becoming a reality for them, as the consequences of assumptions develop into real events. For example, if you're perceived as worthless (incorporating other people's unwarranted opinions of you) then you may not be able to get a job. If a person's treated as if they're a bum, there's the risk that could make

whatever accusation, however untrue, a reality. But that's not because they were what you assumed them to be, unremorsefully insisting that they belonged in such a punishing situation. Sticks and stones, people. You think this continues because people often choose the easiest, simplest route given any circumstance. And it's always easier to label groups of people off some common trait and treat the whole accordingly. It's wrong! You know it's wrong! So why repeat the same shortcoming? Many would debate that it's difficult to be compassionate. Yet it is as simple as asking yourself how you would feel if treated the same. No really, I'm not joking, that is the only question one needs to ask to avoid subjective ruin.

Like I mentioned, how do you expect a person who looks down on a person to proceed? Well, luckily my money's on the fact that any living race with a social system that continued such destructive habits wouldn't last long enough to arrive at a point technology-wise to ever leave their solar system and contact other civilizations. How can we have faith in that when we do not have it in ourselves? Unfortunately


until we choose to discard such terrible and immature points of view and even worse approaches to them, we may well have no future compared to the bleak one we are trajected for. If we continue to behave this way, what will happen if we face catastrophe and our behaviors have separated us so we can't form a united front to meet the challenge?

So again, no magic answers, only my best realistic insight to a problem that plagues the masses. And I certainly implore you to take a half second of thought to consider the feelings of others likely to be affected by how you decide to treat them or at least consider that every cold shoulder, every insult and every condescending scowl for the supposed idiot before you can kill a little piece of them, yourself, and our collective race. There is no acceptable excuse for empathy to be considered a difficult behavior to employ. And you definitely should not dish out such judgment, knowing or rather not knowing the facts. All I'm really trying to say is we have a conscience for a reason and it would do some good if we listened to it more often.

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for the most up-to-date calendar and event information.



Sunday Worship Time

10:00 am In-person
and via Live Stream

► CLIENT from page 7

on the staff is very nice, mostly. I did run into a few in the past that I thought were misguided and they were probably pro-Black. Whoopdy dooo! The issue is, can someone differentiate between differences of opinion and institutional racism? (Reference trending conversations about "per capita" violence and criminal tendencies and specifically FBI statistics.) I'm not so sure some can — let's see if they can imagine not eating breakfast first.

There may be people who are not capable of certain considerations. (There are some people who have aphasia, in which people are unable to visualize from their imagination.)

Another issue I had besides folks being loud or at times aggressive, is stinky people. I proposed a stink squad that might find stinky people and encourage them to bathe; deodorant is cheap! WE HAVE THE TECHNOLOGY!!! It may embarrass some people a bit. I think it's important, sheeit some of the scurvy dogs got LICE!!!! I

knew a few people that caught it. I think this will be reduced now that the warming center season is over. However, a stink squad could in the future help with this as it's a matter of public health, AND getting cleaned up can boost someone's self esteem. People who don't stink are not stigmatized and marginalized the same way stinky ones are.

We didn't get to this too much at the advisory meeting, but agenda item number seven (listed above) with the newsletter idea, seemed a bit redundant. Aren't I doing the newslettering

now? LOL. Number eight on the other hand was interesting — lists of resources are good, websites are cheap these days. Here is an interesting one: <https://squattheplanet.com/>

I look forward to many more of these client advisory meetings. Due to the nature of the "Delphi" meeting, I think the themes will evolve over time. If you the reader have any questions or concerns, bring them to my attention by emailing me at hirethisguy139@gmail.com. I'll compile them on a list and bring them up at future meetings.

Truth or lies: Roary and the blind dog

The nameless stray dog was born in a cave on the island of Tasmania, Australia, on Cole's Beach. His mother quickly abandoned him after five weeks. The red haired golden retriever grew up not knowing he was blind. He had a keen sense of smell and walked with such confidence you never would have known he was blind. Every evening after scrounging around for food he would always find his way back to his cove on the beach.

Byron, who was 10 years old, and his brothers Noah (12) and Roary (13) were all at Cole's Beach building sand castles. Roary said to his brothers, "Please let's go swimming now. It's hot out here."

Roary was a natural-born swimmer, even though he could not see. His two brothers would often swim with him and guide him. This was his favorite thing to do, considering he loved the challenge. It made him feel as though he could see. Byron and Noah kept racing each other building sand castles. Noah said to Roary, "OK — in a minute. Soon as we finish, we'll go take you swimming. Just wait a minute."

"Help! Help! (splash) Help, help (splash)! (splash) Help!" Roary was hollering. He had wandered into the water without his brothers. He was impatient and frustrated because of the heat.

Roary figured if he swam before, he could do it again! But when the bottom went from under him, Roary panicked, realizing he did not know the direction of the shore.

The unnamed dog was in the water cooling off. He sensed that Roary was in a panic, fighting the water. He swam over to Roary, barking. He then swooped under him, placing



FELICIA WILBERT
Groundcover vendor No. 234

Roary on his back, still keeping his head above the water.

Roary's two brothers were calling to the dog, "Here boy, here boy, over here boy!" and raced towards him. The unnamed dog was swimming towards the boys and the shore as though he could see. When they reached the shore, the brothers thanked the dog petting him, hugging him, loving all over him.

Roary said, "It would be nice if we could keep him."

"Do you think Mom and Dad would let us keep him?" Byron asked.

Noah said, "Well, let's go see. Let's take him home with us. We have to. He just saved your life! There's no one else out here — so whose dog is it?"

"He has no collar," said Byron. They were so excited they forgot to scold their brother.

Byron, Noah and Roary were so excited when they arrived home. Seeing their mom, they blurted everything out.

"Roary went out into the water on his own! He almost drowned and the dog saved his life!" said Noah and Byron, talking at the same time.

Mom said, "Wait a minute, what happened? Slow down!"

The boys explained what happened at the beach slowly. "Mom, can we keep him please?"

"Are you all right, son? Do I need to take you to the doctor?"

"I'm all right, no Mom," said Roary.

The dog was bumping into everything; he had never been in a house. Their mom turned around and looked at the dog running into everything. She said, "Looks like that dog can't see."

"Yes, he can!" Roary hollered out. "He saved me from drowning today. How could he find me in the water; and take me to the shore?"

"I don't know, but that dog surely can't see, watch this! Here boy, come here boy," she said to the dog. The dog moved in the direction of her voice. However, he still was bumping into things. She waved her hand in front of his eyes. She asked Noah to go get one of his small balls.

Mom took the ball and waved it in front of the dog's eyes and his face. He did not respond. She took the ball again and repeated the same steps. Then she threw the ball. "Go get it boy."

He did not move or turn his head. Mom said, "He is blind. Don't worry, we'll take him to the vet. Have him checked out and make sure he's healthy. You can keep him. If he is blind, you have to be extra careful with him, like your brother. I'll smooth the dog idea over with your dad. Right now we need to get him some food and give him a bath then

he can stay."

The next day they took the dog to the vet. The veterinarian confirmed that the dog was blind. However, he was a healthy 10-month-old golden retriever. He also informed them that it would be difficult to train him, suggesting they send him to obedience school.

The boys had a fuss with each other all evening, trying to decide the dog's name. They decided whoever the dog chose as his master should name him. He let the boys bathe him, however, he stuck under Roary. That evening at dinner, Roary decided to name him, announcing his name as Colander.

As time passed, Roary and Colander became inseparable. He trusted his dog and his dog trusted him. Roary would tie a rope around Colander's collar, then attach it to himself to swim with him. Even though Colander could not see, he was a great lead dog. He always knew how to return to the shore.

Colander lived to be 21 years old, passing away on the 21st anniversary of their meeting. Roary never forgot how Colander had saved his life. He had a plaque made that said "My Superhero Colander."



Is "Roary and the bling dog" TRUTH or LIES?

Samuel and Martha Waymeans, published March 8, was TRUE.

➔ **CHANGE** from page 4

Homeless statistics in Michigan

Since the housing market has tightened and government aid programs have dried up, more people in Michigan are facing a crisis of the unhoused. According to the most recent report from Michigan's Campaign to End Homelessness, the number of homeless individuals in Michigan increased by 8% in 2022, from 30,113 to 32,589 persons. While other regions like West Michigan, mid-Michigan and the Detroit area also experienced double-digit increases, the western half of the Upper Peninsula witnessed a 47%

increase — and Northern Michigan saw a 56% increase. In the meantime, the northeastern region of the state and southwest Michigan saw a population decline.

Who is doing what?

State Representative Emily Dievendorf (D-Lansing) reintroduced a "Bill of Rights for the Homeless" in July 2023. This bill would have protected homeless individuals from discrimination in the workplace due to their lack of a permanent address, ensure that they are treated equally by all government agencies, and allow them to vote and receive the documentation required to prove their identity.

According to House Bill 4919, an individual's rights, privileges or access to public services cannot be taken away from them or restricted just because they are homeless or thought to be homeless. Homeless people in the state of Michigan are entitled to the same rights and benefits as any other citizen. But much more needs to be done.

This bill is currently in limbo, as it was referred to the Committee on Economic Development and Small Business, but has not moved past introduction.

Regarding the lack of concern about homelessness becoming a top priority for Michigan voters and those around the world, I have spearheaded a

worldwide campaign called Mandate Future Political Leaders to Prioritize Homelessness on Change.org to bring the issue to the forefront. And I hope that Republicans and Democrats alike come together and realize that homeless issues should become among the top concerns of the voters' minds along with the economy, abortion rights, immigration and more.

"Let us always remember that our true wealth lies not in the abundance of our possessions but in the compassion we show towards the poor and vulnerable." ~EPM

Sweet potato and black bean chili

ELIZABETH BAUMAN
Groundcover contributor

Ingredients:

1 tablespoon plus 2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 medium-large sweet potato, peeled and diced
1 medium onion, diced
4 cloves garlic, minced
5 teaspoons chili powder
4 teaspoons ground cumin
Scant ½ teaspoon ground chipotle chile
¼ teaspoon salt
2 1/2 cups vegetable broth
2 (15 ounce) cans black beans, rinsed
1 (14 ounce) can diced tomatoes
4 teaspoons lime juice
½ cup chopped fresh cilantro

Directions:

Heat oil in a Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add sweet potato and onion and cook, stirring often, until the onion is beginning to soften (about four to six minutes). Add garlic, chili



powder, cumin, chipotle and salt and cook, stirring constantly for 30 seconds. Add broth and bring to a simmer. Cover, reduce heat to maintain a gentle simmer and cook until the sweet potato is tender, about 10 to 12 minutes.

Add beans, tomatoes and lime juice; increase heat to high and return to a simmer, stirring often. Lower heat and simmer until slightly reduced, about 15 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in cilantro.

Serve hot. This has become a new, healthy favorite. So perfect for a blustery day lunch or dinner.

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

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Whisper
AARON
Tears whisper
unanswered questions.
Silently shed

*Some have lost their family, most have lost their friend
For them, today brings heartache that tomorrow cannot mend
Where letters are not answered, when no one takes their call*

*...in are the Men Behind the Wall
...ir Freedom, tossed away their rights
...they walk in darkness and sorrow fills their nights
...learned to hide their teardrops but still they fall*

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MAY 1-31, 2024

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